Restoration of pay parity of SOs and PSs

2250. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that prior to 4th October, 2003, the pay scale of Section Officers and Private Secretaries in the Armed Forces Headquarters was identical with their counterparts in the Central Secretariat;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the above parity has been disturbed by revision of pay scale of Section Officers in the Central Secretariat;

(c) if so, the steps being taken for restoration of the above pay parity; and

(d) what is the likely time to be taken in finalisation of the case in respect of both SOs and PSs of the AFHQ?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The parity has been disturbed in case of Section Officers to the extent that the Section Officers in Central Secretariat Service (CSS) have been given non-functional pay scale of Rs. 8000-275-13500 on completion of 4 years of approved service in that grade with effect from 3rd October 2003.

(c) and (d) A proposal was taken up with Department of Personnel and Training for introduction of non functional pay scale of Rs. 8000-275-13500 for Section Officers of Armed Forces Headquarters on completion of approved service of 4 years. The same has not been agreed to.

Progress of Air Defence Ship (ADS) Project

2251. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA:
SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the progress made so far on Air Defence Ship Project of Indian Navy which had already been approved by the Cabinet Committee on Defence and was scheduled to be started in December, 2003;

(b) whether it is a fact that this project is facing problems of non-avail-

ability of steel of required high quality for manufacturing aircraft carrier warships;

(c) if so, the names of the countries approached by Government for procurement of such steel; and

(d) by when this project is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Government have approved construction of an Air Defence Ship (ADS) of approximately 37,500 Metric Tons at Cochin Shipyard Ltd., Kochi. The "concept design" defining the overall ship dimensions, evolution of hull form, general arrangement drawings, structure, stability, weight and space analysis and Hydrodynamic Model Tests have been completed. Design of the ship's systems and generation of detailed design documents/drawings have started. The baseline design of propulsion system has been completed.

(b) to (d) Initially it was proposed to import steel. Due to the progress achieved in the field of indigenous development of the required quality steel, the same is now being procured indigenously. The construction of the ADS is likely to be completed by 2011.

Visit of US Under Secretary for Defence

2252. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the US Under Secretary for Defence Mr. Douglas Feith visited New Delhi in June first week this year;

(b) if so, whether Government expressed its displeasure regarding continued US occupation of Iraq during meetings with him and discussed various issues including missile defence and new strategic partnership between India and the US; and

(c) if so, the details of the issues discussed and the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) A US delegation led by Under Secretary for Defence, Mr. Douglas Feith visited New Delhi on June 1-2,2004 for the scheduled 6th Meeting of US-India Defece Policy Group (DPG).